

REPOSITIONING FOR THE FUTURE: CASE STUDY OF THE RCMP CHANGE EXPERIENCE 1989 - 2000

The Conference Board of Canada

November 2000

"This is what's different. The fact that you are doing this . . . that we are really trying to learn from everything we've been through, this time."

January 12, 2001

**RE: CASE STUDY OF THE RCMP CHANGE
EXPERIENCE 1989-2000**

I am pleased to present you the RCMP's case study on change and renewal. This report was recently completed by Judith Gibson, a principal researcher with the Conference Board of Canada.

As Commissioner Zaccardelli noted when introducing the report at a recent Senior Management meeting in Regina: "the past 11 years have been a modern epic journey and we are going to reflect on this. This study is going to be an important document in the history of the Force." What is also confirmed is that, if we wish to continue to be the police force of choice of Canadians, it is critical that we continue becoming more strategically focussed and responsive.

The report, using a case study format, spans the ten-year period between the introduction of community policing in 1989, and the winding down of the Alignment Initiative in early 2000. It provides an objective view on how the RCMP has changed over time, the gains that have been made, and some of the challenges that remain

I hope you will find the report informative and provocative. If you have any questions or comments regarding its contents, please contact Mark Reber at (613) 993-1941.

Sincerely,

Eva Kmiecic
Deputy Commissioner, Strategic Direction

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"The whole thing when you look at it was a massive undertaking, and there was no master plan. We just tried to do the right things, one step at a time, with all our human frailties . . ."

The 1980s were a decade of change, although for most people the impacts weren't yet obvious. In policing circles, and for the RCMP in particular, the status quo was quietly eroding: crime rates were rising, budget increases were lagging costs for the first time in the RCMP's history, and there was growing criticism from the communities the Force policed. The first cracks in the para-military culture of the RCMP had already come with the introduction of overtime and the creation of a divisional representatives system in the mid 1970s. In the background was broader change - in society's norms, in technology and in the growth of "borderless" crime. Governments were becoming more managerial, and there was a strong impetus for public sector reform. And internationally, in policing circles, there was strong and growing interest in community policing as a service delivery model.

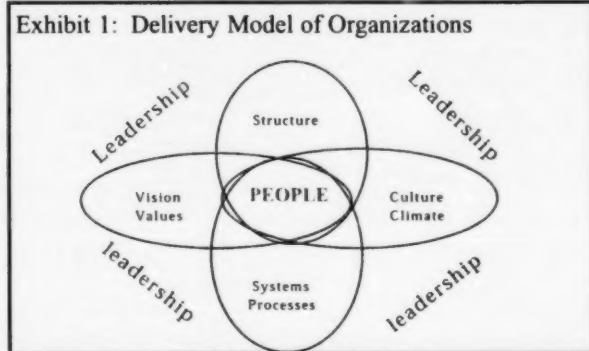
It was against this backdrop that then-Commissioner Norman Inkster announced, in 1989, that the RCMP would adopt community policing. A new Directorate was created, the Community Contract and Aboriginal Policing Directorate, and detachments across the country were instructed to create community consultative committees.

The decision to move to community policing was intended to reposition the RCMP in an environment that was clearly changing, although it was poorly understood at the time. In fact, community policing is based on organizational principles that best practice research today tells us are key to organizational success in complex and fast-paced environments - partnering, collaborative problem solving, empowerment, and teamwork.

Community policing therefore provided an operational philosophy well suited to the new policing environment that was emerging, but it was antithetical to the realities of the RCMP as an organization. For years, the RCMP had been a national icon and one of Canada's most respected and valued institutions - and an organization that was strongly hierarchical, command and control-driven, paternalistic and deferential, tradition-bound and wedded to enforcement as its policing vision. It was an organizational model that had served well, but it was a model that could not be sustained if the RCMP was to develop the flexibility and responsiveness the changing environment of policing demanded. As former Commissioner Phil Murray noted,

"There is a big country out there, and this is a big machine, working day in and day out, 365 days a year. If every decision has to come here, it's not going to function. Things are just too complex now to bring everything into the centre. You have to work with your communities and respond to them, and they are going to vary, one community to another. So to bring every decision here . . . for the kind of work we do, it is impossible."

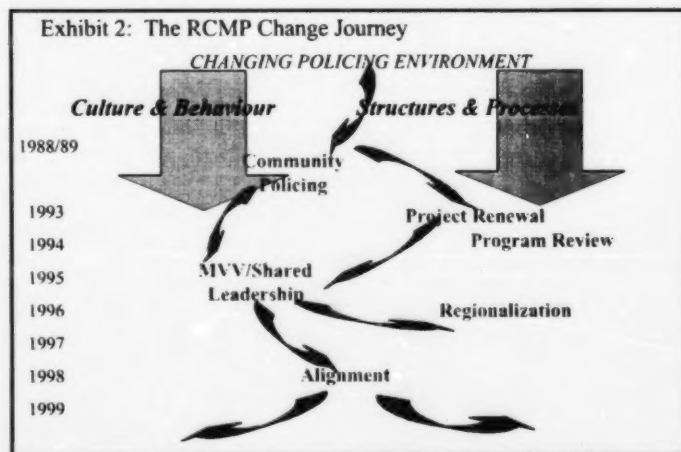
In deciding to embrace community policing, the RCMP dramatically changed the nature of the results it was looking to achieve, and the way in which it would carry out the business of policing. As Exhibit 1 illustrates, this in turn meant that the organization itself would have to change, radically and in ways no one at the time suspected: the heart of any organization's ability to deliver is its people. And their ability and willingness to deliver in turn depends on the context within which they operate - on the structures and processes, culture and climate, vision and values that together shape their experience on the job.



In all this, leadership is key, at the top and throughout the organization. Change brings tough decisions and difficult choices, and when externally driven it often unfolds in chaotic circumstances. Leaders need the courage to decide, but for change to be successful those decisions must reflect not just strategic organizational imperatives but also organizational values related to mission and purpose, the stance towards employees and the treatment of people.

Since 1989, and with remarkable perseverance, the RCMP has been engaged in a long, often painful process to reinvent itself as an organization on the basis of community policing principles¹:

- to move from one size fits all to customized delivery
- to move from command and control to shared leadership
- to become more reflective of the community itself (representation, openness to diverse perspectives)



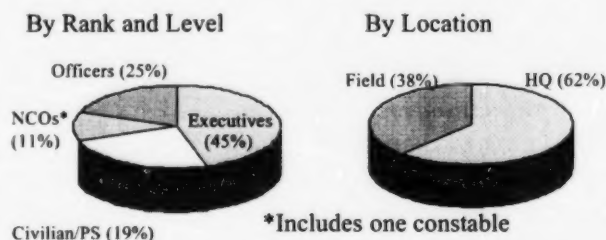
The result has been a series of change initiatives, some internally driven and some a response to external pressures, aimed at changing culture and aligning systems and structures to support culture change (See Exhibit 2).

¹ As articulated by former Commissioner Murray during an interview.

The journey has been difficult for the organization and deeply unsettling for many people in it. Moreover, this drive to 'reinvent' the RCMP has been complicated by external developments - the threat of government cutbacks and then the massive federal budget rollback of the early to mid 1990s, isolated but high profile and damaging incidents, growing public concern about crime, and the profound impacts of technology. And so the RCMP change journey, already complex, has been made more so by the tensions between push forces of change (budget cuts, accountability demands, crises) and the pull forces of values and vision which were given their initial impetus by community policing.

It is now some ten years since the community policing decision that began this chapter in the RCMP's history. A new Commissioner has recently been appointed, and significant change has been introduced. The RCMP is entering a new decade and, inevitably, further change. A stock-taking therefore seemed timely, to get some perspective on the last ten years, identify the lessons from that experience and acknowledge what in fact has been accomplished. The Deputy Commissioner, Strategic Direction, therefore asked The Conference Board of Canada to carry out a review of the RCMP's change story and prepare a case study documenting the process. The findings have also been presented to the Senior Executive Committee (SEC).

Exhibit 3: The Interviews



This case study of the RCMP's change experience begins with the introduction of Community Policing in 1989 and concludes with the winding down of the Alignment Action Team² in December 1999. It is based on two main sources of information:

- Key Documents Review . . . covering files from the Alignment exercise, Commissioners' Directional Statements, the community policing evaluation and other documents considered relevant by the RCMP.
- Interviews . . . close to 60 interviews with individuals identified as having been involved in key initiatives, as leaders, team members and/or participants - from across ranks, hierarchy and regions and including representatives from each employee group (see Exhibit 3).

² The Alignment Task Force and the subsequent Alignment Action Team commenced in 1998.

I. TEN YEARS OF CHANGE: THE RCMP TODAY

"The changes are SO dramatic it's overwhelming. I don't think we can even remember what it was like ten years ago."

"We told them this would make a real difference to the field, and they've seen nothing. Just more on their plates, with fewer resources and services."

"We're like fish in water . . . We're so much in it (this new environment) we don't even recognize it anymore."

How far has the RCMP come in its efforts to transform itself? Interviews make it clear that for employees across the organization the RCMP has changed and changed significantly. Overall, the balance sheet is positive: today's RCMP is more inclusive, more collaborative and more externally focussed, a better place to work and better positioned to deal with the complexities of policing than the para-military organization it left behind.

At the same time, however, progress has been partial: community policing principles are beginning to take hold across business lines but not consistently, old norms die hard, individual behaviour change is slow to come and critical systems in such areas as HR are deeply entrenched. In addition, the scale, pace and complexity of the changes the RCMP has undergone - whether planned change, imposed change or, in particular, change driven by budget cuts - have also left very real problems. And even as the RCMP changed, the world around it has been changing as well, at sometimes bewildering speed.

. . . the positive impacts

Across rank, region and generations, individuals consistently spoke of the RCMP today, compared to ten years ago, in the following terms:

- More externally focussed - on clients, communities, partners, other agencies, other models, ideas, the world
- More modern - in terms of fiscal accountability, civilianization, focus on value, proactivity
- More open - less emphasis on rank, more freedom to challenge and be proactive, greater diversity, more open and transparent communications, greater congeniality, more teamwork

- More effective - improved decision-making, thanks to the restructuring of SEC, CAPRA³, etc; more and more effective partnering
- More caring - more HR and employee focussed, communications more open, more and better support and services to members
- Stronger relationships - with communities and partners - community support for RCMP 'has never been stronger'

... legacy issues: the not-so-positive impacts

At the same time, they also voiced concerns about the RCMP today:

- More vulnerable - greater public scrutiny, lack of expertise, too stretched, relations with the Centre (i.e. federal central agencies) poor
- Skepticism, overwork, risk of burnout - a function of restructuring decisions, resource shortages, high profile change initiatives without visible results
- "Who's in charge?" - managers not managing and not held accountable, empowerment misunderstood and misapplied, direction lacking
- Capacity eroded - budget cuts, lack of resources and expertise, loss of corporate memory
- Core values at risk - new generation of members and employees, new training, culture of entitlement, changes in deployment of recruits, civilianisation going too far? Loss of trust in senior leadership - management has over-promised and under-delivered.

... observations

The impact of budget cuts has been heavy, and availability of funds for operations was a recurring preoccupation in discussions with individuals in the field. It has also been the source of considerable cynicism and loss of credibility at senior leadership levels as the organization consistently failed to deliver on promises of more resources to the front lines⁴.

Concern over the possible erosion of core values is shared across rank, service levels and status. The values and traditions of the RCMP are seen to be the glue of the institution, but there is concern that they are being compromised through changes in training, assignment practices and

³ The RCMP problem solving model, i.e. Clients, Analysis, Partnerships, Results and Assessment.

⁴ Many of the RCMP's funding pressures have now been addressed thanks to a fundamental financial and management review. In addition, all regular members received a pay raise in 2000.

what is seen as a growing sense of entitlement among members. Many also remarked on the impact of generational differences as new recruits bring new expectations into the Organization.

The RCMP's Mission Vision and Values statement (MVV) is widely accepted and for many people it really has provided an important foundation, across rank and categories of employees. Similarly, there was broad consensus on the importance and value of shared leadership and its positive impact on the RCMP, despite "excesses" of empowerment.

Notwithstanding this, lack of direction was an issue for many people. In part, this was around regionalization and the resulting confusion over roles and reporting relationships. In part it reflected impatience with the more consultative and consensual approach to decision-making the organization has adopted, and some of the outcomes. Individuals also talked about lack of vision, however, and where this was an issue, the call seemed to be for a *policing* vision for the RCMP of the future that takes into account the changing policing environment.

Despite many comments that it had all "made no difference in the field," the legacy of change in the RCMP seems very positive, in terms of impacts on the daily working experience of front line employees and how they do their jobs. Consistently, members talked about new levels of teamwork, a new openness to ideas, discussion and challenge, reduced emphasis on rank, more autonomy and responsibility in handling cases, reduced paper burden and access to technology and greater sensitivity to employee issues and needs.

II TRACING THE CHANGE JOURNEY

Over the past ten years, the RCMP has pushed hard on both the "hard" and the "soft" sides of organizational change: beginning with community policing, then moving through Project Renewal and Program Review, engaging in the MVV/Shared Leadership process, regionalizing and, in the latest step, looking at how to align key systems and processes with organizational directions.

... Community Policing

"It was in pure autocratic fashion - we are doing this, you will embark upon crime prevention initiatives, you will adopt Community Consultative Committees. Period. No consultation. It was just top down driven all the way."

"It came out without considering the federal side. It was left to the federal divisions to find the relationships with it . . . and they dismissed it . . . because they didn't see themselves involved with the community. "

"People would say to me, 'Why would we want to reduce crime. As soon as the stats drop HQ will roll into here and take people away from us.' . . . Individuals had a tremendous desire to reduce crime . . . but organizationally? the incentives went the other way."

This latest chapter in the RCMP story begins with community policing. Community policing in the RCMP was launched as a top-down directive to detachments, with little understanding of the nature of the organizational change that would be required to implement it successfully. Detachments were told that this was the new service model and were instructed to establish community consultative committees, with no opportunity to discuss what community policing actually implied or how it should be implemented. The name suggested that it applied only to the contract provinces, with the result that adoption by other parts of the organization has been painfully slow. Moreover, it was confused with existing programs in community relations and crime prevention, and so side-lined as yet another program rather than an operational philosophy.

What community policing in fact meant was a fundamental shift from a professional model of policing, where police were the experts, to seeing policing as a truly collaborative engagement with communities and stakeholders to address deep-rooted issues. It also required a fundamental shift away from centralized, authority-based decision-making. Over the years, the effort to make community policing a reality encountered deep-seated organizational obstacles: a policy-driven approach to front-line policing, with little discretion in the field; burdensome policies and processes; and a lack of leadership support in detachments, in the provinces and in Headquarters.

Notwithstanding all this, major strides have been made in the contract provinces in particular, community policing principles are starting to be used in federal services and to a lesser extent in the policy directorates. Community

CASE 1: COMMUNITY POLICING

"Through the consultative committees, we found out that the police agenda and the community agenda was not at all the same. We were working on the issues we wanted to work on, and the community didn't see those as being issues at all."

BACKGROUND

- Widespread interest in community policing in policing circles in the US and internationally
- Solicitor General document: Policing in the Year 2000
- Crime rates rising in Canada, more and more recurring crime, increasing criticism from communities; growing sense that responsibility needed to be taken by communities as well as police in addressing problems

CHRONOLOGY

1989	Statement by Commissioner Inkster that RCMP would adopt community policing as a service delivery philosophy
1990	Strategic plan developed by Corporate Services, calling for Community Consultative Committees as sounding boards to community
1991	Community Contract and Aboriginal Policing Directorate (CCAP) established
1991/93	Community Policing missions statements developed, widely posted Best practice research phase: looked at community policing internationally, also organizational best practices
1992	Strategic Plan revised and sent to Commanding Officers/HQ Directors for input First national video conference: Commissioner focussed on community policing as the way the Force delivers services
Spring 1993	New CCAP Director appointed, with directive to move on community policing Demonstration projects started (Burnaby) Training undertaken across the country, in partnership with training directorate and where possible linked to demonstration projects
1994/95	Community Policing Review to evaluate state of implementation
1995	First cadets graduated from Depot with community policing/CAPRA training
1996	Principle Centered Leadership training introduced
1998	Regional Community Policing performance review completed

OUTCOMES

"The commitment to Community Policing is now real, and we are finally understanding what it is - among the lower ranks, and some upper management as well . . . also in non-traditional areas like administration and federal services."

"On a scale of one to ten? I'd give it 4 - 5. People just don't understand the basics of it."

LESSONS LEARNED

- The value of strong champions of change, at the top and in key positions who bring a combination of strong commitment, influence and ability needed to drive progress
- The need to consider behavioural and also organizational implications in implementing changes in operational philosophy or approach
- The need for communications strategies to build common ground of understanding across the organization, in terms of meaning, implications, possible applications and broad understanding of what is involved, personally and organizationally
- Value of pilots and demonstration projects

support for the RCMP has risen and remains strong despite bad press and serious threats to the contracts in some provinces. CAPRA, a key tool in community policing, is part of cadet training at Depot. And community policing also triggered a groundswell of interest in leadership training as the need to manage differently became clearer. Extensive leadership development has been carried out in the field and in Headquarters, with over two thousand people trained in principle centered leadership.

As a change process, then, the implementation of community policing has unfolded in three distinct phases:

"I'm the perfect example. We honestly believed we were already doing community policing . . . we were involving the community, but it was the "father-knows-best" model. Ultimately we determined what was important, and we chose which parts of the community we would deal with."

- Community policing in the RCMP was launched by announcement - a top-down exercise in which the change was simply proclaimed, in full expectation that it would then happen, with little analysis of the organizational implications and implementation issues.
- In the mid 1990s, with a new Commissioner and new leadership in Community, Contract and Aboriginal Policing (CCAP), community policing got a distinct boost. CCAP began an extensive investigation of how community policing was working, sponsored demonstration projects, began training and responded to growing evidence of the need for leadership training.
- Today the challenge is not so much implementation as continued integration: community policing is generally accepted and the principles and the tools, notably CAPRA, are becoming an operational reality across the organization.

CASE 2: RENEWAL, CUTS AND RESTRUCTURING (1993 - 2000)

"We were just getting people on board with respect to why we had to do project renewal, that it wasn't a question of money, that nobody was going to lose a job in all this and everybody was going to be happier . . . all the dislocation and relocation, but we're working well . . . and then Program Review comes along. Well, that was distinctly financially driven."

ORIGINS

- The Community Policing audit had identified HQ-driven, hierarchical decision-making as a serious obstacle
- Financial pressures were building - federal budgets, nation-wide cuts to transfer payments cascaded down to municipalities, policing loads increasing and new skill sets needed

CHRONOLOGY

Sept 1993	Streamlining and Restructuring Task Force set up to address financial shortfall, streamline the organization
1993	Revised audit policy published and implemented
May 1994	Project Renewal was created and tasked with continuing the streamlining and building a leaner, more flexible organization: worked closely with Community Policing to align organizational change with Community Policing approach
1994	Corporate policies streamlined to remove procedural elements: people were brought in from the field for consultation and training and charged with examining divisional policies in consultation with HQ policing centres.
	Independent File Management system introduced
1995	Program Review: mandated cuts as part of federal government downsizing: 2200 positions, \$175 million cut, mandatory 10% across the Board
1998	Project Renewal winds down

OUTCOMES

- Increased autonomy to the field
- Massive reduction in HQ policies and guidelines governing operational decisions
- Independent File Management introduced
- Headquarters restructured, number of Directorates more than halved
- Significant restructuring and downsizing of the Force
- 2200 positions cut, middle management ranks reduced
- expert capacity of the Force eroded
- shift to district policing
- \$175 million cut from RCMP budget

LESSONS LEARNED

- Value of field involvement in decisions affecting operations
- Value of having models as framework for analyzing options and choices, i.e. the "onion" model used by Project Renewal to focus cuts on those parts of the organization furthest from the core function of policing / importance of using models with care: the 'onion' model meant that capacity in support areas critical to police services were cut too heavily
- Power of crisis to help drive change in attitudes and behaviour / risk of cynicism where commitments of change initiatives not kept

...Project Renewal... Program Review

"We had audit units traveling the country, not looking to see what good things people were doing but what they were doing wrong, contrary to policy. We knew that if we were going to embrace risk, empowerment, we needed to get right at the root of policy."

"We always said that all of those savings . . . would be moved down to the front lines. Well, it never happened. Because we were all of a sudden required to return a phenomenal amount of money back."

"As someone on the front line, the big change has been the leeway we have now in our investigations. . . in so many places all the nice words are there, and nothing happens. But this really has taken hold, it has found real meaning with us."

"We cut the management layer far too much . . . the junior officers and middle managers are tremendously overworked, increasingly disenfranchised."

"Basically, in the RCMP integrity simply means keep your word, and we were seen to be breaking our word every which way you could possibly imagine."

By 1993, it was becoming clear that the top-down, bureaucratic model the RCMP operated under was inconsistent with the commitment to community policing. At the same time, a Streamlining and Restructuring Task Force, later reborn as Project Renewal, was established and tasked with creating a leaner, less top-heavy and more flexible organization that would be more supportive of community policing and better able to deal with the budget shortfalls.

The commitment was to eliminate impediments to front-line policing and divert savings from restructuring to the field - the focus was on Headquarters and service functions, with the cuts falling to those areas furthest from the 'core' business of on-the-ground policing.

In fact much was accomplished through the work of Project Renewal and related initiatives:

- Policies governing front-line policing were radically reduced and related policies revised to reflect the changes
- The Independent File Management system was introduced, giving new levels of autonomy to individuals carrying out investigations
- The number of directorates in HQ was reduced by more than half.

Coming hard on the heels of creation of Project Renewal, however, were massive federal budget cuts that began rolling out in 1994 with the first round of Program Review. In all, the RCMP lost 2200 positions and close to \$175m in funds, achieved through a cross-the-board cut of 10%. Middle management employees were drastically reduced and operating budgets in the field were slashed. For most people, Project Renewal became synonymous with Program Review. Moreover, cuts were now seen by many to be the driving force behind Community Policing, which was to prove a key impediment.

The impact of this period continues today: heavy workloads, inadequate operating budgets in the field,

cynicism over the buy-outs under the federal Workforce Adjustment policies, loss of trust in senior management, and a middle management group that is overworked and demoralized. At the same time, several interviewees noted that this period signalled, in a way nothing else could have, that the status quo was no longer viable.

"We were really doing external consultation by this stage, out there in the communities . . . Internally, we had always said that what we were doing outside with the community was what we needed to be doing internally as well. It just hadn't happened before."

"People say, how many people were consulted in that? Well I'll tell you that everybody in the organization had an opportunity to contribute. If they chose not to, that was their choice."

"In a way it was totally incestuous. We weren't at that stage yet – we had a hard job getting employees to talk amongst themselves, let alone talking with the community."

. . . Mission, Vision, Values / Shared Leadership

By the time of the fall meeting of Commanding Officers (COs) in Ottawa in 1995, the internal tensions within the RCMP were difficult to ignore. The cuts were creating a legacy of negativity, there were signs that traditional values were eroding, divisions within the Organization were surfacing, and in the contract provinces the threat to the community policing base was growing. A new Commissioner, Phil Murray, had taken office in summer 1994.

The outcome of that meeting was a decision to undertake a broad-based, community driven leadership exercise around organizational values. An external consultant was brought in, about 140 members and employees were trained as facilitators and focus groups were held across the country in a process that involved about 4,000 people in all. There was some Division Staff Relations representatives and broad-based involvement by regular members, civilian members and public service employees. However relatively few officers participated, and there was little involvement from Headquarters. It was also an internal exercise: few stakeholders or community representatives were brought into the process. The MVV/Shared Leadership statement that came out of those discussions

was presented at the DSRR conference in Charlottetown in June 1996, was accepted by SEC and widely published.

What has been the impact of the MVV/shared Leadership exercise? It is widely referenced and is viewed by many as one of the pillars of the new RCMP, across rank, employee status and geography. As one person put it, *"MVV is slowly becoming something the Force lives by. It is always there, as something we have to take into account. It comes back to us, every time, and we are starting to live it, slowly."*

CASE 3: MISSION, VISION AND VALUES / SHARED LEADERSHIP

"I can draw the line in the sand when things changed. It was when SEC came up with MVV and shared leadership. We still need change, but it was a watershed year."(1995/1996)

ORIGINS

- Severe morale issues as a result of cuts during Program Review
- Incidents and ethical issues, concerns over erosion of values
- Need for a breakthrough in organizational change

CHRONOLOGY

Fall 1995:	CO meeting, Ottawa: decision to engage whole community in broad-based leadership exercise, what employees wanted the organization to be, the values
Winter 95/ Spring 96:	Facilitator hired, 140 people from across the country trained as facilitators and sent back out to carry out focus groups: some support from DSRRs, roughly 4000 employees participated Parking Lot issues from the consultations were compiled and passed to Directorates for action
June 1996	Results presented at DSRR conference and accepted by SEC
Fall 1996	Position of Ethics Advisor created
1997-98	Consultations on definition of Values with document released Fall, 1998

OUTCOMES

- Widespread acceptance of MVV as the Force's philosophy
- Statement of RCMP leadership competencies developed/MVV values being integrated into key HR processes:
- Problems of buy-in/gap between values and behaviours continues to be a source of cynicism

LESSONS

- Value of broad-based engagement of employees in building buy-in
- Value of identifying and introducing supportive mechanisms to culture change, i.e. Ethics Advisor, ADR
- Need to ensure participation by all key groups, i.e. middle management levels poorly represented, no external stakeholders, communities involved
- Need to include issues of application and interpretation in discussion forums, i.e. provide platforms for groups to build common understanding of terms and principles
- Need to manage expectations of change by minimizing explicit commitments, clarifying assumptions
- Need for training, and for changes in systems of rewards and consequences to support individual reflection and behaviour change

"Some people would say, 'Listen, I'm empowered. I can do what I want.' Well, that's not what it means. The other side of the coin is accountability . . . The only difference is that you are not being prescriptive . . . the old, command and control model, is a very prescriptive one."

"(The Parking Lot issues) . . . a collection of symptoms, really. . . you can address symptoms but the root causes don't go away."

"We thought we would get . . . the essence of what the RCMP ought to be striving for, the core issues, something I can feel proud about. So I knew where we were going, that this was it, and I'd do what I can to get there because this makes sense . . . But everything is in the MVV. . . "

At the same time, however, the MVV exercise has generated its own legacy of issues and these are still playing out today: wide-spread confusion over what empowerment meant, and expectations that were difficult and in some cases impossible to meet. The consultations surfaced a long list of issues and problems affecting people in the field, and resolution of many of these "Parking Lot" issues continue today.

Moreover, for some, the exercise failed to provide the vision of the RCMP of the future that they had expected.

Perhaps most difficult has been that the behaviours set out in the MVV instantly became the standard against which employees judged their leaders - and leaders, predictably, fell short. It takes a long time for people to absorb new values so that they are reflected consistently in behaviours. At best, the MVV is a touchstone for individual choices and reflection. At worst, it became a weapon to be used against supervisors and leaders and another source of cynicism in an organization where negativity was already rampant.

SEC was well aware of these issues, and it took a number of steps to address them:

- The appointment of an Ethics Advisor the same year the MVV/Shared Leadership statement was ratified (1996). The Ethics Advisor was given the job of building understanding of the implications of MVV across the organization. He was also to sit in on SEC meetings, serving as a 'mirror' to SEC on how it was reflecting the MVV/Shared Leadership statement in its decision-making,
- A commitment to Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). Adoption of ADR not only led to improvements in employee relations and a significant decrease in grievances but has been a catalyst to training in conflict management and relationship building skills in the RCMP.
- Continuation of best practices research through a series of study tours designed to expose senior leaders in the RCMP to organizations which had undergone major change and to the leadership issues such change creates.

. . . Regionalization

At the spring meeting of Commanding Officers/Directors in 1996, participants focussed on the need for further culture change and how to advance it. The group included individuals from all categories of employees at the invitation of SEC, and the outcome of those deliberations was a decision that the RCMP should be regionalized.

"Well, low and behold, we went through the whole thing, at great cost, and nothing has really materialized - in fact, members have seen a deterioration in the level of services, support services by admin and information. And another layer. . ."

Different reasons are attributed to this decision: to improve the quality of SEC decision-making and get better buy-in for SEC decisions by ensuring a field perspective at the table; to improve the presence of HQ in the field and build better understanding in the field of organization-wide issues; and to achieve economies which could be reallocated to front-line operations.

Roll-out was swift, and it caught both the RCMP as a whole and concerned governments by surprise. Deputy Commissioners were appointed for each of four regions, regional Headquarters set up and administrative support in the field centralized regionally. Each region was left free to choose how it would go about implementation, and quite different approaches were taken across the country.

The process, and the speed with which it was implemented, resulted in complications:

- issues with provincial governments in the contract provinces
- difficulties in the relationship with the Solicitor General, the Ministry and central agencies in the federal government
- role confusion, especially for Commanding Officers in the provinces whose role seemed to have been usurped by the Deputy Commissioners

The details of regionalization are still being worked through, but to date reviews are mixed. Among those best positioned to know, there is generally a sense that decision making at SEC has benefited. The autonomy given to each region in implementation has meant that regionalization looks quite different region to region and has moved at different speeds. In the field, it is believed that quality and

availability of services has eroded with loss of local control. For many, regionalization didn't streamline the organization but simply added another layer. As for the reallocation of resources to the field, little has materialized. And for some time after regionalization was implemented, the move of Deputy Commissioners out of Ottawa meant that the Commissioner and only one Deputy remained to manage the relationship with federal stakeholders.

Notwithstanding continued controversy about the benefits, regionalization is acknowledged to have been another step in moving the RCMP forward. As one member in the field put it, *"Was it (regionalization) beneficial? I can honestly say it has been, because it forced the mindset of members to change . . . but it sure has created a backlash."*

As a change process, the regionalization decision shares many characteristics with the introduction of community policing close to a decade earlier, i.e.

- the decision was a surprise to most people in the RCMP and outside
- it was to be implemented immediately
- little by way of implementation strategy, guidelines or criteria were given to the field
- corrective action was taken as problems emerged

However, there were also important differences:

- The decision to regionalize was in effect SEC's ratification of the recommendation of participants at the Aylmer conference. The regionalization option was not new to the RCMP, and analytical work had been done at the centre in the period leading up to the meeting, but the decision to proceed appears to have been a response to the consensus that emerged from the group.
- Similarly, the lack of an overarching implementation strategy for the new regions was both consistent with the RCMP's commitment to empowerment and shared leadership and a pragmatic recognition of the strong differences among regions.

Better front-end planning could well have off-set some of

the worst difficulties regionalization encountered. However it is also true that decisive action is sometimes called for, recognizing that there will inevitably be problems that need to be managed. In fact, it is very possible that regionalization would not have been achieved if a more consultative process had been used.

... Alignment Initiative

"That's about the time the ATF was established, because by then it was very apparent we weren't going to succeed unless we really started aligning things big, big, big time. . . The idea was to remove the inhibitors to true empowerment, true culture change . . ."

As regionalization unfolded, the problems associated with the RCMP's systems and processes were becoming increasingly evident. Although the organization had decentralized significantly, managers had trouble getting the financial and HR information they needed. Many of the Parking Lot issues tabled during the MVV exercise continued to plague the organization, and it was clear that the systems were posing major obstacles to operationalizing the MVV. Financial pressures were also continuing: the RCMP was facing a \$10m deficit and it had a December 1998 deadline for making a business case to the Treasury Board Secretariat for additional funds.

"This organization . . . communicates more than ever, but . . . it has not been strategic communication about the objectives. It's aimed at getting people excited and involved. Like ATF . . . Once an objective had been reached, THEN you could have communicated."

The decision to launch the Alignment initiative was taken at the CO/Directors meeting in February 1998. A small, full-time task force was created in Headquarters reporting to two Deputy Commissioners who stepped forward to champion the Alignment exercise. The Alignment Task Force (ATF) was launched with a major communications effort, including fact sheets, a Pony Express article and an organization-wide broadcast. The focus of the mandate, and for many people the point of the Alignment exercise, was to address and solve the underlying systemic problems behind the many process issues plaguing the organization. In its early fact-finding stage, however, the ATF identified leadership as a critical issue and, with the support of its champions on SEC, developed a two-pronged strategy to address both the structural and process issues it had been asked to look at and also the leadership gap it had identified.

Over the next year, the Alignment process operated on two parallel but quite different tracks:

"This (Alignment) was going to be the implementation of all these years of talk. Expectations were huge . . . the RCMP was going to have some very fundamental massive shifts as a result of this. Meaningful stuff. Not incremental stuff."

Then it took from March until August to set up the infrastructure . . . already people were saying, hold on here, five months . . . what's going on?"

- Eight working groups made up of key people from both Headquarters and the regions investigated and developed recommendations on each of the areas assigned by SEC⁵, working with the support of task teams and with coordination by Task Force members. The working groups were set up in June of 1998 and reported to SEC in June of 1999, one year later.
- Key members of the ATF had a succession of meetings with SEC on leadership and related issues. Beginning in January, 1999 the Task Force team undertook a series of divisional workshops for managers from HQ and in the regions to discuss leadership issues and build support for change.

As Alignment was getting off the ground, however, another financial shock hit the RCMP with the realization that the RCMP had in fact over-spent its budget, exceeding its Parliamentary appropriations. The work of the ATF therefore took place against a backdrop of acute financial pressure and further cuts to the field, intense scrutiny by the central agencies and an independent external review.

In June, 1999, the recommendations from the working groups were presented to SEC and the decisions that resulted set the framework for far-reaching structural change both in specific areas like Air Services and Laboratories and in such key systems as Human Resources. Because of the complexity of the issues in HR, an HR Alignment Implementation Team (HRAIT) was created reporting to the Chief Human Resources Officer. In addition, further work was requested on Headquarters restructuring. The Alignment Task Force and existing working groups were disbanded, the Directorates were given responsibility for following through on the decisions, and a new group, the Alignment Action Team (AAT) was created to oversee implementation.

During this same period, an independent resource review of the RCMP from an outside firm was done (sanctioned and

⁵ There were eight working groups in all: Human Resources, Role of HQ, Operations Models, Forensic Laboratory Services, Air Services, Alternate Service Delivery, Finance/Corporate, Information Management and Technology

"There were to be no sacred cows. Nothing was beyond the ATF's purview. As a result I think it was spread too thin. Maybe it was important to have so many people as possible involved so that they would buy in. But what it did was slow down the review. I think the sense of urgency just disappeared because the ATF took so long."

"The Guiding Principles . . . we went for three days, came up with the 37 Guiding Principles and that was the last in print I've seen it since. The only thing you ever heard about it was just on that one e-mail."

funded by the Treasury Board), which reported in August. The results of that review were decisive in the RCMP's subsequent negotiations with the Treasury Board. The Policy Directorates, already charged with implementing the Alignment decisions, were tasked with developing business plans for Treasury Board reflecting the recommendations from the external review. With decisions taken by SEC on such key outstanding issues as Role of Headquarters and a new Operations Models, and with the work of HRAIT on-going, the AAT's oversight role became less critical and in December of 1999 it was officially disbanded.

What was Alignment's legacy? First, the SEC decisions on the Alignment recommendations meant significant and in some cases fundamental change in how the RCMP operates - the restructuring of Air Services, the adoption of a new Operations Model and the priority on Organized Crime, the appointment of two new civilian Deputies in Headquarters, changes in labs and, perhaps most fundamental, direction for significant change in HR systems and processes.

In addition, the analysis carried out by the Alignment working groups strongly influenced the independent review carried out by external consultants, which in turn influenced the outcome of discussions with the Treasury Board and the RCMP's ability to access new funds.

In other words, the Alignment initiative has resulted in decisions that will have significant impacts on the way the RCMP operates in the future. Yet it is widely seen as having failed. The roots of this lie at least in part in the huge gap that existed between what people expected from the exercise and what it was actually structured to deliver. Expectations were also high among individuals directly involved in the Alignment exercise, and again, the experience left many people disenchanted - the process was long and the issues were very complex, people were asked to participate without relief from their on-going responsibilities, and in some cases working groups tackled issues without the expertise they needed. And although groups had been encouraged to think "out of the box" and to radically challenge the status quo, the decisions taken by SEC were more middle of the road than some had hoped. Nor did participants see much follow-up to their work.

From one perspective, then, early implementation in

particular followed many of the tenets of good change strategy: a task force of full-time staff was created to drive the process, resources were allocated, and two Deputy Commissioners served as official champions of Alignment. An elaborate planning process got underway and a complex structure of steering committees and working groups was created to address each of the eight mandated areas. Extensive effort was made to communicate to the field, and the leaders of the task force held extensive briefings with SEC, which allocated them significant time. The deliverables - the recommendations to SEC - reflected this complexity, presenting SEC with critical decisions on a variety of fronts that had complex impacts and presented thorny problems of implementation.

"There will be good things . . . if it gets done. What would be deadly would not be people resisting change, but people not pushing to make all this happen. Alignment is not, we did this in 1999. Alignment is, we STARTED this in 1999."

From another perspective, however, the Alignment initiative never moved beyond planning, although the language used to announce and promote Alignment suggested that it was to make significant things happen. If the outcome had indeed been implementation, then the broad-based participation on steering committees and working groups would have been important to getting the buy-in necessary. In fact, however, the task of the Alignment Task Force was essentially to develop recommendations for change to SEC - identifying and proposing a 'vision' for change in the areas it had been asked to examine, developing proposals to SEC based on working group analysis and broad consultation. In this scenario, the participatory strategy it adopted meant that key groups at times lacked specific expertise, the process was long and complex, and unrealistic expectations were generated both among participants and in the field.

Whether among observers of the process or participants in it, the underlying issue is that very little has been seen to change - in part because implementation has been slow, in part because some of the changes, in HR, for instance, have such broad implications that turning the corner on one issue opens up so many more. Alignment set the stage for change in the big systems and processes, like HR, IT and Finance, that are the final piece in the organizational puzzle. The real challenge presented by the Alignment experience is implementation: ultimately the results of Alignment will depend on how determinedly those changes are implemented, against considerable systemic barriers.

CASE: 4: ALIGNMENT INITIATIVE

"The ATF was established . . . because by then it was very apparent we weren't going to succeed unless we really started aligning things big, big, big time. . . The idea was to remove the inhibitors to true empowerment, true culture change . . ."

ORIGINS

- Project Renewal / legacy of cuts / MVV/CCAP Reviews 94/95 through to 98/99
- Financial Crisis: from \$70m surplus four years earlier to a deficit of about \$10m; requirement to present business case to Treasury Board by December 1998, including proposed improvements to key systems, structures and processes
- Recognition that key systems, especially in HR, were inhibiting change
- Major Alternative Service Delivery initiatives federally

CHRONOLOGY

February 1998	Commissioner's Directional Statement: theme alignment
March 1998	CO/Dir MEETING: decision to set up Alignment group Alignment Task Force created Fact Sheet: first communications
May 1998	Fact finding process undertaken
June 1998	ATF Presentation to CO/Dir - DSRRs Fact Sheet / Pony Express / Force-wide Broadcast SEC retreat with ATF 8 Steering Committees established
Jan 1999	Financial Review of RCMP / Budget overspending HR Alignment Workshop/Divisional Workshops
April 1999	Integration Workshop, Cornwall - Guiding Principles produced Integrated Working group established
May 1999	Steering Committee Progress Reports Leadership workshop on Alignment
June 1999	Presentations of Working Group recommendations to SEC, Moncton
July 1999	Commissioner's Broadcast - SEC decisions on Alignment
August 1999	RCMP Resource and Management Review by external consultants
Sept 1999	Creation of Alignment Action Team: Role of HQ committee reconstituted, Rank Structure working group reconstituted New appointments at HQ
Oct 1999	HR Alignment Implementation Team (HRAIT) established
Nov 1999	SEC Decision: Operations Models Role of HQ, Force priorities
Dec 1999	Alignment Action Team disbanded

OUTCOMES

- "Professionalization of the finance area; it will have a profound effect"
- "The new civilian deputies - Strategic Direction, Finance"
- "Changes in air services"
- "The new Operations model (jury still out, but a new approach)"

LESSONS LEARNED

- Importance of senior level champions
- Value of engagement processes for building buy-in
- Need to manage expectations
- Need to structure for do-ability: mandate very broad, groups lacked expertise, no project charter
- Need for strategic communications: high-stakes messages and focus on buy-in problematic, given complexities
- Need to invest: freeing up people's time, ensuring appropriate expertise, space and resources
- Need to recognize contribution of people involved and to ensure follow up on work

III PERSPECTIVES ON THE CHANGE PROCESS

The RCMP tackled head-on what is arguably the most difficult but also the most fundamental issue in organizational change, which is deep culture change. Moreover, it did so in a way research tells us is most effective - through broad-based participatory processes, more open communication and focussed attention on such key levers as leadership beliefs and behaviours and HR processes.

At the same time, the process has created many new issues and, according to many people interviewed, cynicism and frustration with change are a front-line reality. This was also evident in discussions. Many of the comments about the change process itself are understandably negative: complex change is difficult to do well, there are losers as well as winners, uncertainty is high, and expectations can be difficult to satisfy. Yet the comments also reflect dynamics around change that can be attenuated.

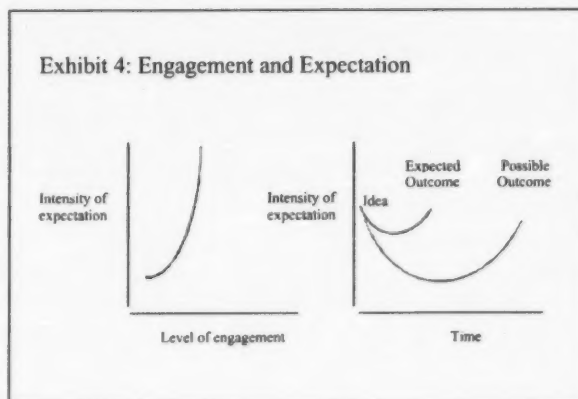
Five issues in particular seemed to underlie difficulties the RCMP has experienced:

- the dynamics of engagement and expectation
- the RCMP in the federal system
- the "soft-hard" paradox: managing the human face of change
- communications
- planning and strategic thinking

... dynamics of engagement and expectation

Disappointed expectation is a common source of frustration and cynicism in organizations, and the RCMP is no exception. In part, at least, this reflects the fact that in engaging people in discussion of change you will also generate expectations, and that this dynamic needs to be carefully managed (see Exhibit 4).

Involving a broad base of people in fact-finding, direction-setting and decision-making is fundamental to the RCMP's shared leadership model. Research shows it can also be key to good decisions, broad-based support for decisions and effective implementation. Moreover, in organizations where a participatory culture is not deeply imbedded, it is probably important to err on the side of inclusion. Otherwise there can be a strong tendency to revert to hierarchy and command and control models of decision-making.



As Exhibit 4 illustrates, however, engagement tends to produce expectations as well as buy-in - of the outcomes ("my solution is *the* solution") and for immediate results. Consistently, the organization has experienced a degree of mis-match between what was expected - in terms of action, behaviour and decision-making - and what was feasible and/or appropriate, given the nature of the RCMP and the realities of long-term behavioural and culture change. Examples abound: slow take-up of the community policing model; expectations of immediate behaviour change arising from the MVV exercise; unmet expectations for immediate redress of problems; cynicism and frustration over the lack of decisive action and quick results from Alignment.

There are nonetheless ways to reduce this problem:

- Heavier front-end investment in strategic "pre-thinking" and project planning
- Customized rather than one-size-fits-all strategies for engaging people
- More explicit mandates, e.g. use of project charters
- More sophisticated and targeted communications, especially to the field

... the RCMP in the federal system

A difficult legacy of the decade has been a deterioration in relations between the RCMP and the federal agencies that are its stakeholders, most notably the central agencies. More so than most organizations, the RCMP sits between two worlds, serving two sets of masters with very different expectations, needs and cultures (see Exhibit 5).

As an arm of government, the organization operates under the umbrella of federal legislation, regulations and policies, with reporting relationships to the Solicitor General, Treasury Board and the Public Service Commission. Its business is policing, which is high profile and vulnerable to public controversy, yet it is part of a government system in which predictability is prized, risk poorly tolerated and negative publicity shunned. By mandate, government agencies are focussed on the broad public interest and public accountability, and they tend to be characterized by rational management models and a risk-averse culture.



As a service deliverer, the RCMP is accountable to a diverse set of clients including contract provinces, client federal departments and other agencies, among them other police forces domestically and internationally. And in delivering those services, its employees work with individual Canadians, with communities and with a range of organizations both directly or, in such

boundary-crossing areas as organized crime, indirectly. In this context the perspective is micro-rather than macro-level in focus - on the clients and on individual responsibility for actions taken, in a culture that is increasingly problem-solving oriented and entrepreneurial, often with little recognition of broader organizational accountability.

The Commissioner, SEC and Headquarters staff bridge these two quite different worlds, and they are called upon to meet the expectations of both. The hierarchical, centralized and authoritarian RCMP of the late 1980s was a relatively good fit with the needs of the Ministry and central agencies for information, for predictability and for low risk. The current model - consultative, with decision-making relatively decentralized and greater individual and local autonomy - means that the Organization is arguably less capable of meeting the expectations of the federal system, although better positioned to deal with today's complex police environments. Staff in the policy areas in particular are caught in the middle, sensitive to the needs of central agencies but, in the 'new' RCMP, both less connected to day-to-day operations and less able to respond to federal government interests and needs.

Given the very real differences in mandate, role and culture between the RCMP on the one hand and the central agencies on the other, the relationship is unlikely to be easy. There can be strong potential benefits to sustained efforts in building the relationships, as has been recognized in recent Headquarters restructuring. In part, this is a question of building greater understanding of the legitimate differences between the two - upwards, to encourage greater understanding within government of the reasoning behind key organizational decisions and the policing imperatives that drive them; down into the organization, in terms of the realities of the RCMP's place within the federal system, the needs of the larger system and the implications for the Force at all levels. Because it is so critical to the RCMP, the dynamics of the relationship require both on-going management and careful consideration in relation to individual change initiatives.

... the "soft-hard paradox: managing the human face of change"

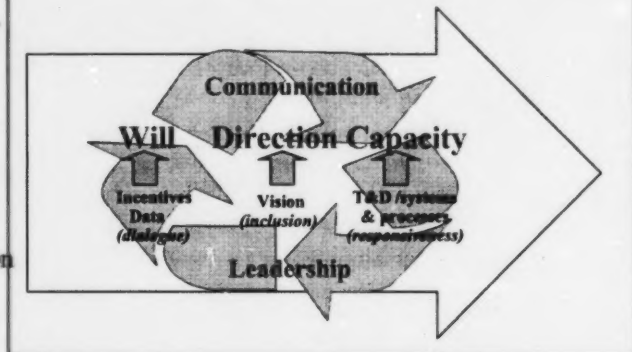
There is a paradox in successful change, a need to exercise "soft/hard", "loose/tight" management styles simultaneously and to embrace seemingly contradictory demands - attention to human issues even as organizations push for high performance and rising standards; promoting innovation and entrepreneurship on the one hand, while ensuring standardization, control of core processes and high levels of individual accountability on the other.

Many organizations focus predominantly on the 'hard' side of the management equation, but often to their cost. In particular, the "soft" costs of organizational change - skepticism, lost trust, morale and burnout - can be highly damaging in the long run and very difficult to redress. So too is the excessive change "load" so often imposed on individuals involved in the actual work of change. At the same time, most organizations find the "soft" issues involving people the hardest to deal with effectively.

Yet if there is one overriding lesson to be drawn when considering future change, it is that the roots of successful organizational change lie in people- their assumptions, priorities, behaviour and commitment.

Exhibit 6 presents a perspective on the human dynamics of change. It suggests that leadership and good communications are the foundations of successful change, and it defines the stages of implementation in terms of what *individuals* tend to need in order to embrace change:

Exhibit 6: Managing the Human Face of Change



- **Building the *will* for change:** People need credible information substantiating the need for change and an opportunity to grasp the implications personally. On the one hand, this is a question of providing data and opportunities for dialogue. On the other hand, it is also a question of changing rewards and consequences in relation to individual behaviours and choices.
- **Setting the *direction* for change:** Where change is needed, new organizational directions or vision need to be articulated in a way that is credible, consistent and compelling, by leaders at the most senior levels and in messages delivered throughout the organization. The role of middle managers and supervisors is therefore critical. To the extent possible, it also means including people in the process: research is clear that individuals' commitment to implementation of a decision increases significantly when they are involved in the process of reaching it.
- **Building *capacity* for change:** Individuals need to see their own place in the 'new' organization. Change requires new skills and generates new approaches to work. To embrace change, individuals need to believe that they are personally capable of being successful in it - or at least that they will be supported to acquire the skills or knowledge they need.

"Human due diligence" - recognizing, understanding and factoring in the impacts of specific changes on people, how they will react and how they need to be supported in the transition - is critical to effective change strategies and the Achilles' heel of many organizations. In many organizations, it can be the first to go in the push to implement, and the RCMP appears to be no exception. The workforce reduction process, for instance, involved untargeted across-the-board cuts, largely through buy-outs of regular members. It delivered the savings needed but left a legacy of cynicism, overload and a loss of middle managers and expert capacity the RCMP still labours under today. Another example comes from the experience of the Alignment working groups. Tasked with complex mandates and tight timelines, participants did their work on top of regular workloads, seeing little follow-through on key outcomes and receiving little feedback, recognition or reward for individuals who were main players, especially civilians. Again, the "soft" issues of frustration, disappointment, and change fatigue have left an unfortunate legacy of the Alignment exercise.

There is fierce pride and commitment to the RCMP, not just among regular members but among civilian and public service staff as well. This means that no one is apathetic: it is their organization, their family, and the sense of what is at stake in change is acute. This, coupled with a shared leadership environment, means that passive acceptance is unlikely, the unquestioning obedience of the command and control culture long gone, and the risks of frustration and skepticism high. It is relatively easy for the RCMP to enlist commitment: members and staff step up to the challenge, over and over again. However the costs of not delivering are proportionally high, and the risk has perhaps never been higher of "drawing down" that bank of commitment too far.

... communications

Change on the scale experienced by the RCMP over the past ten years takes place at several levels simultaneously. At any point in time, the connections between one initiative and another can be difficult to see, and individuals' understanding of the full process is at best partial, no matter where they sit in the organization. The result can be ambiguity, confusion and widespread misunderstanding.

Communications is critical in such an environment, and it is also a major challenge for the RCMP. Information is not reaching the front-line: for most people daily operational pressures and the flood of messages from Headquarters mean that information is at best accessed when needed and not before. Viewed objectively, for instance, the Alignment team made exceptional efforts to communicate, yet few people outside Headquarters had actually heard of it until they were approached to participate in some way. Often, in interviews, individuals revealed only a partial understanding of the issues and of the pressures and trade-offs the RCMP has had to make.

Exacerbating the communications problem has been the impact of workforce reductions and related changes on people in middle management levels: there are fewer of them, workloads have increased, and many feel disempowered and alienated. Yet research makes it clear that these people are channels of organizational directions and culture, and thus absolutely critical to effective communication in large organizations.

Perhaps the most striking symptom of this challenge has been the view, widely-held, that Headquarters has failed to deliver on its promises? first the parking lot issues that emerged during the MVV exercise, then the savings that were to be redirected as a result of regionalization, then the 'fixing' of systems that alignment was supposed to deliver. Underlying it all, at least in part, is the gap between what was said, what was understood, and what was actually possible.

... planning and strategic thinking

In any significant change, leaders need to deal with two seemingly contradictory realities. On the one hand, effective change requires careful front end planning or strategic "thinking", clear targets and strong accountability frameworks. This is the foundation of traditional planning models, although full front end analysis of implementation challenges is often short-changed (see Exhibit 7). In today's fast-paced and changing world, however, the reality for most organizations is far

from linear: unanticipated problems, shocks and opportunities are typical, and successful change often reflects a focussed commitment to learning and adaptation including testing or piloting key elements before full scale implementation (see Exhibit 8).

In fact, effective transformational processes require organizations to engage in seeming opposites in parallel: both strategic and managerial thinking; entrepreneurial adaptiveness and careful planning, control that is at once loose and tight, processes that combine flexibility and rigour.

Moreover, large-scale organizational transformation of the kind undertaken by the RCMP often occurs as a succession of initiatives. These can unfold at different levels and in different time

frames simultaneously but ideally all are shaped by the governing vision, purpose and values, supporting the desired change in some way. The process tends to be both reactive, as crises occur, and opportunistic, as options present themselves or next steps emerge. Many of the elements of traditional planning come into play: resources, structure, process, accountabilities and deliverables are all critical to success. However, as noted, careful front-end strategic 'thinking' and piloting or testing before full-scale implementation is critical.

How does this all relate to the RCMP experience?

- At the macro-level of long term organizational transformation, the RCMP has shown an exceptional constancy of vision: the commitment to building a more responsive, inclusive and collaborative organization is a continuous thread throughout the change journey -from the streamlining of policies begun with project renewal to the grass-roots nature of the

Exhibit 7: Planning-based change model

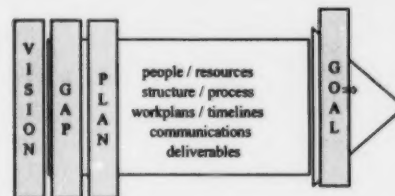
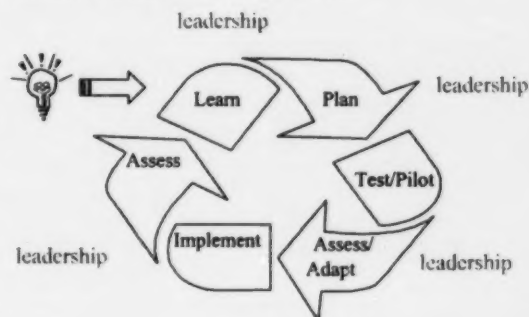
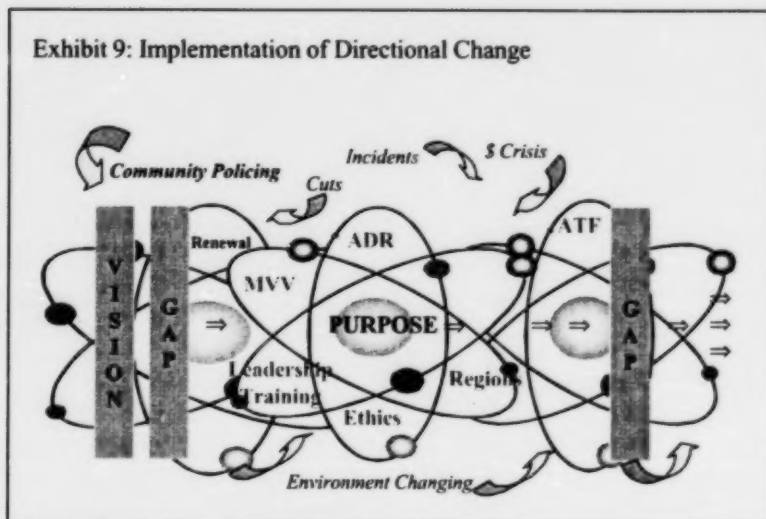


Exhibit 8: Adaptive change model



MVV/Shared Leadership exercise to the investment in leadership development and Alternative Dispute Resolution, to the focus on restructuring through regionalization and later Alignment (Exhibit 9).

Exhibit 9: Implementation of Directional Change



- When it comes to individual change initiatives, members of the RCMP tend to be action focussed but less inclined to front-end strategic planning or "pre-thinking" about the full implications and what might be involved in implementation. This has been the root of at least some of the difficulties the RCMP has experienced, both in process and in outcomes.

In particular, the fact that a change agenda is being moved forward at several levels simultaneously can cause significant problems, e.g.

scope confusion
unrealistic expectations
loss of credibility
problems in decision-making
little sense of progress

- Use of pilots seems to have been a particularly successful strategy for the RCMP. Interviewees mentioned a number of cases where innovations were piloted in one area and subsequently picked up and/or introduced more broadly. For instance, the use of demonstration projects around community policing, beginning in Burnaby, provided a significant impetus to efforts to build understanding of community policing and to broaden its application.

If it is in the planning phase that the RCMP has tended to fall short, the Force is in good company: research tells us that despite a strong focus on results many North American firms have tended to short-change the front-end "pre-thinking" stage. In question is not action planning so much as the strategic thinking that needs to precede this phase, and a realistic structuring of the project to ensure the do-ability of the task.

IV FOCUS ON LEADERSHIP

Leadership in today's complex environment is no longer a question of position. Leadership behaviours are needed throughout organizations, at all levels.

... leadership at the top

Although leadership is needed organization-deep, senior executives have a unique and critical role to play. They have the perspective and influence to sustain organizational direction over time, and they alone control key organizational levers for wide-scale change - vision and values, strategic goals and accountabilities, high-level structures, systems and processes.

Their task is therefore complex. Senior leaders need to understand the fundamentals of organizational change, identify and initiate strategic initiatives that will move the organization forward, and manage contradictions that are often invisible to the organization at large. They need a clear vision, a sense of an end-point or goal that can be the compass for decisions in the midst of complex and protracted processes. They need an ability to capitalize on unanticipated opportunities to move ahead and ensure, as shocks hit, that the organizational response remains consistent with the vision that is driving it.

The challenge is not only organizational but also personal. Employees expect their leaders to "walk the talk" daily - in their actions and decisions, in what they say and in the questions they ask. The scrutiny is unrelenting, and the gap between stated values and leadership behaviours is the only real measure employees use to weigh an organization's true commitment to change.

This poses a dilemma for leaders, even more so when the issue is change in culture and values. The lag time between the announcement of new values and an individual's ability to integrate those values in behaviour is generally long. Yet in times of major culture change, employees look to their leaders to show immediate congruence with the stated values and their daily behaviours, and they respond with cynicism when their leaders fail that test.

What is the leadership record in the RCMP?

- Over the past ten years, the RCMP has re-articulated its values, undertaken a massive restructuring, removed many impediments to front-line decision-making and undertaken a major review of key systems and processes, the results of which are just now being realized. In part this has been externally driven by budget cuts and accountability pressures, in part it has been driven internally through SEC decisions. And despite many problems, it is clear that the driving vision of the organization - an RCMP that is more inclusive, responsive and collaborative - has both inspired key initiatives and influenced the organization's response to external pressures.
- That this is the case is a real testament to its senior leaders, given the pressures the RCMP has faced over the past decade. SEC members made the appointments that gave new impetus to community policing, they initiated project renewal and throughout the cuts of

program review kept sight of an organizational vision that went beyond the efficiency and effectiveness criteria of that exercise. They launched the Mission, Vision and Values process and embraced its outcomes, pursued regionalization and created the Alignment initiative, tackling the most difficult but critical organizational issues underpinning transformative change. Doing so has required sustained commitment, strong insight, even stronger persistence and at times great personal courage.

- As champions, SEC members consistently have taken a strong public stand in support of the new directions and key initiatives through directional statements, Pony Express interviews, town hall meetings and Commissioner's broadcasts. This SEC is reportedly the most travelled, the most accessible and most open leadership team the RCMP has ever had, in a period when pressures on executive time have never been more intense.
- At the same time, SEC members and other senior leaders have been vulnerable to charges that they do not "walk the talk". Promises to move resources to the regions have not been kept, individual behaviours have been seen to be inconsistent with the MVV, and SEC decisions have not gone as far as some members wanted to see. A number of factors seem to come into play in this on-going dynamic of disappointed expectation:

Circumstances such as budget cuts which have compromised Headquarters' ability to deliver on commitments, i.e. to move resources to the front lines during project renewal and regionalization;

Widespread expectations of immediate change in leaders' behaviour, and a perceived failure to act on visible examples of behaviours out of line with new values;

Expectations of "quick fixes" for problems identified during consultative processes, when many were in fact linked to intractable systems problems;

A communications approach that made change a life-or-death issue for the Force, demanding break-through thinking, radical transformation and personal commitment of employees, but in a context where the results tended to be incremental and/or slow to implement;

In the case of specific initiatives, little front end consideration of strategic issues affecting implementation, in some cases coupled with ill-defined mandates for project teams;

Differing perceptions of and differing levels of commitment to the organizational vision that is being pursued.

... leadership in the ranks

Senior executive may play a critical role in change, but the task of leading goes well beyond the executive floor. Wherever they work, people have the opportunity to influence others, to influence the context in which they work and to promote, obstruct or ignore change in organizational direction. And in the case of large-scale change, is involved, research identifies certain positions and roles are particularly crucial:

- *Middle managers and front line supervisors* - Research points overwhelmingly to front line supervisors and middle managers as the linchpins of corporate culture and directional

change. In survey after survey, employees report that they look to their immediate supervisors as their primary source of information, that that is the message they trust, and that if there is a gap between what the CEO says and what they hear in the office, it is the message from their manager they will believe.

- *Informal leaders* - All organizations are populated by people who are highly influential among their peers, independent of official position. These "natural leaders" can be strong allies in organizational change efforts. They can also be the source of costly and intractable opposition, if they are not on side with new directions.
- *Team leaders and representatives* - The people chosen to lead specific change initiatives require credibility within the organization, knowledge of the organization and specific skills: good team-building and relationship skills, project management skills and organizational skills in particular.
- *Champions, gatekeepers and sponsors* - In addition to the project team itself, organizations need to ensure that the proper level of public support, internal brokering and decision-making is available, at appropriate points
- *Change agents and entrepreneurs* - The leaders of the change initiatives discussed in this report were in a number of cases invited by the Commissioner and/or SEC members to head up the initiative, in formal positions or as team or project leaders. And in many cases, what has been achieved has been due to a potent combination of commitment, ingenuity and proactive opportunism on the part of such individuals. In fact, change agents who can make things happen from the middle in large organizations are a vital resource, and the RCMP has had many over the years - people who embrace new ideas, understand the organization, have an ability to influence and will challenge the system.

Such people can be effective in driving change, but they can also create resentment around them: they need support, they need management and at times they need protection. There are a number of examples where SEC seems to have understood this, making insightful appointments and creating informal reporting relationships that circumvented the formal systems, a strategy that has had successes but has at times been costly in terms of relationships.

The RCMP seems to have recognized the importance of leaders to the success of change initiatives, but efforts to engage them have tended to be exhortatory rather than focussed on skills building and leadership development. Middle managers have sometimes been seen as obstacles to change rather than key agents, and perhaps because of budget cuts relatively little training has been available to them. In the MVV exercise they "stayed away in droves" and were allowed to, even though their buy-in was essential. And although participation in consultative forums such as the CO conferences has expanded, this middle group tends not to be well represented. Whether or not "leaders in the middle" absorbed, understood and ultimately championed new organizational directions seems at times to have been more a matter of personality and chance than a focus of strategy.

Occasionally it has been different. In the area of community policing, for instance, the key role of managers was recognized and widespread leadership training was made available in the middle ranks. In a number of cases, local pilots of innovations and use of demonstration projects has proven to be a powerful catalyst to change, not only providing evidence of value but building local leadership support and offering a platform for focussed investment.

By and large, the RCMP has had positive results through the combination of the right people, seed money, scope for action, a blind eye to small infractions and a senior level champion - a pattern that is very similar to how innovation unfolds in organizations.

... building leadership capacity

Building leadership capacity is a top of mind issue for Canadian organizations today: transformational change makes it an imperative. No matter how senior they are, people need help to understand and integrate new values with personal behaviour and to acquire the skills the new values, and change itself, demands. Leadership development takes many different forms, but there are key outcomes that are needed - new appreciation of the need for change; new understanding of self and impact on others; new models and frameworks for understanding organizations and issues; and new skills.

The RCMP has tackled the learning issues associated with leadership at several levels:

- best practice study tours to give senior leaders in the RCMP a first-hand experience of lessons to be drawn from organizations which had been through significant change;
- extensive leadership development for managers, front-line supervisors and employees sponsored by CCAP in support of the community policing objectives;
- Numerous sessions with SEC and with regional leaders to discuss their leadership roles, with leaders of the Alignment Task Force;
- Modernization and updating of introductory management and officer development programs;
- On-going work in the HR directorate to identify core competencies and adapt key processes to reflect the RCMP's leadership needs, a process still very much underway.

Building greater leadership capacity through effective leadership development at key levels in the organization appears to be critical for the RCMP as it modernizes. This is one area where building on existing foundations will be critical to the organization as change continues.

V FAST-FORWARD: OBSERVATIONS & FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

For all the many difficulties of the past decade, the RCMP change story to date is one of remarkable successes: the RCMP is a profoundly different organization today, and the record suggests that it has made noteworthy progress in realizing the organizational vision it has pursued so actively. There is also strong continuity in what has taken place over the past ten years. And the record reveals many strengths in the organization's approach to change. At the same time, there are lessons to be drawn from past experience that can help to offset, if not avoid, some of the negative consequences of the past decade.

. . . strengths to build on

"You need to back off and let things evolve. There are times when it is appropriate to intervene and other times when you just have to let it go . . . it's hard to get the balance, but if you really put all the emphasis on accountability, then empowerment gets destroyed."

"After dialogue we agree that this is the direction we are going and then people are empowered to carry out the direction we jointly agreed to."

"Some people want a body on the table every time something goes wrong. . . We're not talking about abuse of power or process, we're talking about people taking risks and other people not thinking it was appropriate at all. You have to help people along the way."

"Headquarters and the divisions have been great in making communications transparent. This organization has moved very, very far in the right direction over the last nine years in terms of transparency and communications."

- **Senior leadership championing change** - change over the past decade has been advanced by the commitment of senior leaders. SEC today is the most visible and accessible the RCMP has ever known with the Commissioner and executive committee engaged in extensive travel and town hall meetings. They have demonstrated consistent public support to the change direction and individual change initiatives, although they have not always gone as far as some would have wished. Notwithstanding this, the consistency of the message and the level of support provided to key principles and to individuals leading change by the Commissioner and senior leaders overall has been striking, at times at great personal cost.
- **Strong change champions in the ranks** - key people with a combination of commitment, influence and experience who have brought a 'just-do-it' spirit coupled with energy, ingenuity and entrepreneurship in getting things done despite systemic obstacles.
- **Strong commitment to dialogue and shared leadership** - participation in key forums such as the CO conferences has been broadened and strong efforts have been made to expand the base for input and decision-making generally, something research suggests is critical to buy-in of change.
- **Far more open communication** - extensive efforts to communicate information about and philosophy behind change, through such vehicles as e-mail, Pony Express, Commissioner's broadcasts,

Directional statements, etc.

"It was a matter of giving members a chance to understand what they were being told, to figure out how it fits with what they were living on the ground."

- **Consistent message about key planks of the organizational vision for the 'new' RCMP** - inclusive, responsive and representative - through community policing and MVV/Shared Leadership.
- **Successful use of pilots** - demonstration projects in community policing, for instance, provided hard data, objective evidence of benefits and on-the-ground learning as well as specific incentives to detachments to engage in the project.

. . . things to consider

At the same time, there are some important lessons to be drawn from past experience that can help to offset, if not avoid, some of the negative consequences of the decade:

. . . communications need to be more strategic

"As soon as we press the send button, we have the impression that the communication has been completed, without taking into account the feedback and the human aspect of what communications is all about".

Effective communications are critical, with key stakeholders and internally, where this is both an on-going challenge and a key implementation issue for specific change initiatives:

- to build common understanding or 'shared meaning' around key ideas and concepts, i.e. the confusion around community policing and empowerment typify the problems that arise when this isn't done;
- to give a realistic message around outcomes, so that expectations aren't raised that can't be met.

In part the challenge is to get messages out in a way that people understand not only what is happening but *why* it is happening. But communications need to be multi-directional, up and across as well as down. Real ingenuity is needed to build effective communications in organizations as large, wide-spread and decentralized as the RCMP.

...more strategic front-end "thinking" is needed

"HQ saw it (community policing) as an operational issue, delivery on the street. Not about administrative structures, culture, aligning the organization . . . all of a sudden we were expected to refocus, do things in an entirely different way, in spite of the organization we had, the way we were."

"We didn't discipline ourselves. We allowed anyone affected to leave rather than being strategic. We lost the wrong people, created a vacuum. For expediency. Today, we're rebuilding the things we dismantled."

Without falling into the rigidity of formal planning models, the RCMP could benefit from a more strategic front-end consideration of potential challenges, organizational issues and human dynamics in launching new initiatives., e.g.

- project scope, complexity, impact and success factors, as a basis for project planning
- impacts of proposed change, how to offset the negatives and leverage successes
- key relationships that need to be managed
- nature of participation and engagement called for; communications messages and challenges
- potential barriers and opportunities for leverage, inside the organization and externally

... managing expectations is critical, particularly where the process is broadly participatory

"They told us we were at such a critical juncture, that the status quo is no longer an option. They moved people, inspired them to try again. And in the end? It was the status quo."

"Some change takes a long time to unfold . . . that should be part of the communications strategy when we send out our goals. Because the problem is not the change process, tough and flawed though that is. It is more the misunderstanding about what is possible."

Disappointed expectations have been a source of great skepticism and negativity in the RCMP over the past decade. Because commitment tends to be so high, the costs of not living up to expectations can be particularly high. Managing expectations can mean many things:

- Developing approaches to employee engagement that are customized to the particular task, rather than relying on a one-size-fits-all approach
- Communications strategies designed to communicate boundaries and complexity, including platforms for broad-based discussion.
- Setting clear and realistic mandates, ensuring strong project 'management' and well thought out communications strategies.

... "Human due diligence" needs attention

"We tried to do all of this through the voluntarism of our people. And people did an outstanding job. But it needed real experts, focus, time. We didn't invest."

"It's been a rough road . . . the organization says listen, we need your help. You care so much about the Force, you want to do the right thing . . . but it takes you right out of the game. And when you come back into it . . . it's hard to describe."

"In spite of the Commissioner's pronouncements that we have to be more tolerant of mistakes, you know, people get nailed to the wall. Every time something hits the fan, the middle manager has to wear it...I can't really blame them for being so resistant to change."

The people most directly involved in change tend to become deeply engaged and committed. In the RCMP, where organizational loyalty and a sense of duty are very strong, this is doubly true and the need to attend to the human impact of change is particularly critical:

- Recognition for effort is important, and this is an area where the RCMP seems to have fallen short, especially with civilian members and public service employees.
- Follow-up is critical: people need information on the results of their efforts and to see that it has been considered.
- Where behavioural change is needed or wanted, support also needs to be made available, e.g. training.

There seems to be some tendency to take the loyalty members and employees have for the organization for granted. The organization tends to call upon individuals for too much, too often, and without recognition of the impact on their lives or their work.

... Committed leaders will be critical to the RCMP's future success, at all levels but particularly on the front lines.

"It's the first line supervisor who will make or break the organization. The corporals are the 'pace cars' of the organization. Where we have great supervisors it works."

"You can't put in that kind of strategy (independent file management, empowerment) without a training strategy. Guess what got cut? Anything associated with training had the heart cut out of it."

Leadership needs to be addressed as a strategic organizational issue, at the most senior levels and throughout the organization. Measures to strengthen leadership commitment and capability at all levels would be timely. In particular, mid-level managers and front-line supervisors play a pivotal role: they are the organization's most powerful communications tool, they determine the climate within which employees work, and their reaction to proposed change will be decisive in how it does or doesn't take hold. Building leadership capacity at this level is one of the key levers of effective change available to the RCMP.

... Employees need support in acquiring new skills or in embracing new approaches to doing their job.

Attention needs to be paid to providing training, education and development opportunities to employees as well as to

managers and front-line supervisors.

IV IN CONCLUSION

This report summarizes feedback and observations on a decade and more of focussed and intentional organizational change in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police - what has been accomplished, what it has cost and what can be learned from the process.

What is the legacy of ten years of change in the RCMP? As noted at the outset, the RCMP today bears little resemblance to the para-military organization of the late 1980s. It is a modern organization, and it has made remarkable strides in building a culture of empowerment, responsiveness and collaboration that is demonstrably more appropriate to effective policing in today's environment than traditional command and control models.

At the same time, the RCMP operates in a larger context where the cost of mistakes, multiple accountabilities and public scrutiny exert powerful pressures for retrenchment. Predictably, there has also been fall-out from many changes over the past decade - eroded capacity to carry out the business of policing, eroded commitment among members, change fatigue and cynicism, loss of trust in senior leadership, among members and among key stakeholders.

Given the scope and depth of the transformation the RCMP has undertaken and the real trauma of the changes it has absorbed, residual issues are to be expected. They exist, and they need to be factored into future decision-making - without retreating from the true legacy of the decade.

Despite problems the balance sheet is resoundingly positive, when seen in light of the vision of the RCMP that has shaped the last ten years - as a responsive, collaborative and inclusive organization. The RCMP may only be part way there, but progress is both real and impressive. Change fatigue is also a reality in the organization, but people also understand that change will continue. Research tells us that the RCMP is on the right track, in direction and emphasis, and the foundations are clearly well laid for the next phase - hopefully informed by both the successes and the hard lessons of the decade just passed.

"When you stand back and look at this continuum over twelve years, you actually see a pattern and it is overwhelmingly a good thing. We can quibble . . . but we launched the right things and we are going in the right direction. We're another organization altogether, today."